(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to fill up the posts so as to raise the revenue; and

(c) if not, the number of posts vacant in tax departments under his Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) In so far as Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) is concerned, for the years 2000-01 and 2001-02 the total number of vacancies was 4201, out of which Screening Committee allowed to fill up 1401 posts by abolishing 2800 posts. These posts have since been filled up. For the years 2002-03 to 2005-06, the total number of vacancies in CBEC were 9545, out of which Screening Committee allowed to fill up 2579 posts by abolishing 6966 posts. Out of these 2579 posts, action has already been completed in respect of 906 posts and action has been initiated to fill up the remaining posts.

In so far as Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is concerned, there were 9138 direct recruitment vacancies in Groups A, C & D during the recruitment years 2001-02 to 2005-06. Government has allowed filling up of 3300 posts in the Income Tax Department and remaining 5838 vacant posts are slated for abolition. Surplus Cell of Department of Personnel and Training has nominated 275 employees for redeployment in Group C & D posts. The remaining posts are being filled up through permissible channels.

Lending by banks in Vidharbha region

761. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Public Sector Banks are now sensing a great lending oppotunity in the rural and agriculture sector, following the Centres decision to announce a Rs. 4,300 crore package for the Formers of the Vidharbha;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Government of India has

announced a package for Vidharbha region of Maharashtra for the districts of Amrawati, Wardha, Yavatmal, Akola, Washim and Buldhana. Besides, other items the package envisages an additional credit flow of Rs. 1275 crores in these six districts in 2006-07. This target of additional credit flow has been allocated by the Steering Committee of the State Level Bankers Committee amongst Commercial Banks (Rs. 625.55 crores), Regional Rural Banks (Rs. 107.54 crores) and the Cooperative Banks (Rs. 625.55 crores).

RBI and NABARD have issued guidelines to banks for implementation of the above.

Loans written off by public sector banks

762. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount of loans written off by Public Sector Banks during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government paid full amount to compensate the Public Sector Banks affected by this write-off, if so, the total amount reimbursed to these banks;

(c) what is the quantum of loan advanced by the banks in the Co-operative sector which were written off;

(d) how much money was reimbursed to the Co-operative Banks; and

(e) if not, by when Government would pay the outstanding amount with interest to the Co-operative Banks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) the Non-Performing Assets written off by Public Sector Banks during the year 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 were Rs. 11308 crore, Rs. 8102 crore and Rs. 9933 crore respectively .

(b) No, Sir. However with a view to strengthen their balance sheets, facilitate their adopting Basel-II prescriptions, meet their future capital requirements through Initial Public Offer, instill confidence, among investors for investing in their shares and to enable them to expand their business, Government has decided to net off the entire accumulated